



**COLORADO**

Department of Transportation

Office of Policy and Government Relations

**DATE:** April 24, 2015  
**TO:** Transportation Commissioners, Executive Director, Executive Management Team, Branch Managers, and Office Directors  
**FROM:** Andy Karsian, Office of Policy & Government Relations  
**RE:** Weekly Legislative Report – 2015 Session of the Colorado General Assembly

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## Overview

As time ticks towards *sine die* the pace under the dome increases, the days last longer and the emotions run higher. It is hard to get quality time with the legislators because everyone is scrambling to complete the more 150 bills still on the calendars. Staff, lobbyists and legislators feel the pull of the final day, knowing that it is going to be a long eight days to get there.

This week CDOT worked on three bills in committees. The Safe Routes to School bill passed out of House appropriations with \$750K attached. The bill passed with a 10-3 bipartisan vote. CDOT continues to work with the sponsors and advocates on finding infrastructure funding for the program, but the requirement to use CDOT money is no longer in the bill.

In an early Tuesday morning conference committee, six legislators – three Senators and three Representatives – debated the I-70 tire tread bill. Unfortunately for the proponents who worked so hard on the bill for seven months, the proposed compromise did not pass and the bill remained a study for the Transportation Legislative Review Committee to discuss over the summer.

Finally, the Senate introduced the awaited SB 272, Transportation Bonds. CDOT promptly asked to oppose the bill. While open to the idea of bonding for infrastructure, this bill does not provide any reliable funding for the Department to backfill the new \$3.5B in bond payments if voters approve the measure (see below).

## Legislation

**Senate Bill 15-272 (Transportation Bonds).** This bill, sponsored by Sen. Baumgardner and Rep. DelGrosso, submits to the voters a proposal to use half of CDOT's federal gas tax revenues to secure \$3.5B in transportation bonds. The bonds would cover around 30 projects from CDOT's 228 list, and some other project stakeholders added. Most of these projects would be large capacity building projects on highways around the state. In 1999, when CDOT first bonded for transportation projects, the state had already dedicated 10% of the sales and use tax for transportation. This allowed CDOT to continue funding existing infrastructure around the state and pay for bond payments. As these SB 1 funds are no longer available, this bill identifies the SB 228 money as the means of paying for the \$3.5B in new bond payments. SB 228 funds, however, are not reliable and would not cover the costs of the bonds. Therefore, any money CDOT paid on the bond payments would come from some existing revenue streams inside CDOT. The most likely place for this money to come from is the operations and maintenance funds. CDOT would have to decrease ongoing maintenance on existing infrastructure in order to pay for the debt payments for the new projects. Obviously, this is not a responsible way of moving projects forward in the state. CDOT remains opposed as long as a stable funding stream to pay for the bonds remains undefined.

If you have any questions on these or any other legislative issues please contact Andy Karsian at 303-757-9073. Weekly memos and our bill tracking chart are available online at: <http://www.coloradodot.info/about/governmentrelations/state-government-liaison>.

